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Food for 1943

The American harvest this year is more than a national event. It is a grave world problem. The devastated and needy areas of the world are more vast than ever before in history. The areas of comparative bounty are correspondingly few. Of these, the United States is by far the most productive. Therefore our national harvest has international moment far beyond its normal significance. Allied peoples in the forefront of the struggle against fascist tyranny rely upon this harvest for indispensable foods. Peoples under the Axis yoke look to it as a promise of freedom. The harvest of 1943 will have incalculable consequences.

Therefore, the battle for food during the next few months is a matter of deep concern to religious people. The outcome will greatly affect the opportunities for international friendship and cooperation in the years ahead and condition the possibilities of a better world order. Relief is the pre-condition of reconstruction, adequate food reserves are prerequisite for relief, and a bumper harvest is necessary for surplus stores. That is the logic of the situation.

Concern for this year's harvest is inevitably heightened by awareness of the obstacles which stand in the way. It must be said quite frankly that the prospects for the record harvest so badly needed are not good. Many mistakes have already been made. Confusion, conflicting plans, divided responsibility, hesitant and tardy action have all increased the original obstacles. It is by no means certain that sufficient steps to avert the tragedy of an inadequate harvest can be organized in time.

This, however, is not the time for recriminations. There have been enough of these and to spare, so that the key objectives have been partly obscured, and the psychological obstacles increased. Perhaps the main factor underlying the errors and slowness of preparations for this year's crops is the difficulty for citizens of a rather comfortable democracy — whether in official position or in private life — really to understand the new phenomenon of total war. Especially is this true, when the perils we confront are not as vivid and immediate as they are for the countries of the Old World. Be that as it may, bitter debate on past mistakes will injure rather than aid the tasks immediately ahead.

The time calls for cool thinking and quick, effective action, not only by the government but by all the groups of citizens which make up American democracy. Not least in importance is action by those, like the church groups, who sense the significance of the larger issues at stake. The main job during the next few weeks is to get the fields plowed and the crops planted despite shortages in machines and manpower, and the farmers' fear of shortages. This calls not only for initiative by a wide variety of local groups but also for ability on the part of large numbers of citizens to undertake new and strange responsibilities imposed by total war. This task and the later task of harvesting will test the ingenuity and adaptability of our people.

Naturally, there will be mistakes, all manners of difficulties, since much of the farm program will have to be improvised. Yet the necessary crops, or most of them, can be grown and reaped if the situation is understood and attention is focused on the principle objectives. It is here that the churches may be able to render their greatest service.

The pages which follow attempt to summarize certain aspects of the food problem, based upon materials of the Department of Agriculture and other sources. They do not pretend to present an expert analysis of the situation. Rather, their purpose is to help stimulate religious groups to explore the various fruitful ways by which they can help to win the fateful struggle for the 1943 harvest.

The time for the most effective action is short. But much can be done if we remember how much depends upon the outcome.

Proposals for Immediate Relief

The specter of malnutrition and disease in occupied Europe haunts the conscience of churchmen and statesmen within the United Nations. It is clear that the only final and thorough solution for the problem of dire hunger in Europe is the defeat of Nazism, whose aggression and systematic looting are the cause of Europe's suffering. The hope of victory, however, does not meet the immediate needs of millions for food and medicine. The question, posed more insistently by each succeeding winter of the war, is whether some relief can be brought to the prisoners of Hitler without strengthening the bars of the prison. The success of famine relief for Greece, inadequate as it is in view of the need, has renewed hopes that an affirmative answer is possible.

Various reports indicate that the worst areas of hunger in Europe are these: the Jewish ghettos in most sections, but particularly in Poland; the cities of Greece; the scorched-earth areas of occupied Russia and Poland; and the poorer city areas in Yugoslavia, Poland, Belgium, Norway, and France. In these areas there is undernourishment or actual famine caused by lack of calories as well as vitamins and minerals. Tuberculosis and other diseases are increasing rapidly, and the preconditions for deadly epidemics are present. The most tragic aspect of the situation is the gradual destruction of the younger generation, the hope of a new and better Europe.

The success of relatively small shipments of food to Greece, transported and distributed by agents of neutral governments, has encouraged the hope both here and in Britain that similar steps may be organized for other occupied countries. The allied governments are satisfied that the relief shipments to Greece have not aided the Nazi war machine. Consequently it seems possible that other relief projects can be developed which would not menace the purpose of the blockade.

The oldest group to campaign for such relief projects in this country is the group associated with former President Herbert Hoover. The latest proposal of this group, as presented by Mr. Hoover in Carnegie Hall on February 20, is briefly as follows: it is proposed that limited food supplies be purchased in South America with funds of the occupied democracies, transported by Swedish ships and distributed by representatives of the Swedish and Swiss governments. The sending of relief supplies, to some of these nations at least, would involve more elaborate transportation arrangements than relief for Greece has required. The plan also proposes a much longer route for supply ships, since Turkey is a major source of food for Greece.

A somewhat different and less ambitious proposal was adopted by the Federal Council of Churches in December. The resolution said:

> The plight of those European peoples, who, after heroic resistance to the aggressors, are now enduring subjugation and desperate suffering claims the sympathy of all informed Americans, and weighs especially upon the consciences of Christians.
>
> Much of their distress cannot be relieved until they are freed from the grip of their conquerors. But wherever it is possible to alleviate any part of their present sufferings, and especially to maintain their lives, without giving vital aid to their oppressors, we believe the American people will wish to have it done.
>
> It seems that ample measures in their behalf have not yet been taken, partly because the desperate extremity of their present condition is not known, partly because it has been assumed that help cannot be rendered without material assistance to the enemy. The fact is that unless such necessities as powdered milk and vitamins are made available, a very considerable proportion of the population of Belgium, and possibly other subjugated nations, may perish before the war's end. We believe the peril now threatening these people must be faced and measures must be taken to save them from epidemics and even starvation.
>
> We do not advocate a scheme of general relief. What is proposed is merely the extension to other areas in desperate need of the plan already functioning with the full approval of the Allied Governments for the relief of Greece, provided the occupying powers will agree to the same conditions and safeguards of its administration.
>
> The plan involves the purchase of supplies in the United States, their transport in neutral ships to neutral posts, trans-shipment in sealed cars to the areas of want, and direct distribution to those in most desperate need under the supervision of a competent and trustworthy international commission of neutral Red Cross officials.
>
> Through such means, millions of lives of our Greek Allies are now being saved, without aid to the Axis and to the satisfaction of Allied Governments. We cannot do less for the succor of others of our Allies who also fought valiantly in defense of freedom, and who suffer their present afflictions in the common cause.

The proposal has been made somewhat more specific by a group of 45 Protestant leaders, who expressly dissociate themselves from ex-President Hoover's feeding schemes. The group urged on February 18 that American supplies of dried milk and vitamins be sent on a neutral ship to a neutral port, there trans-shipped in sealed cars to Belgium for distribution to children, nursing and expectant mothers and invalids by the International Red Cross. The limited scope of the project and the compact character of the supplies, it was felt, would place little strain upon shipping facilities, yet would give some of Hitler's younger victims a chance to endure until victory.

This proposal parallels plans recommended by a group of British churchmen, headed by the Bishop of Chichester and known as the Famine Relief Committee. The group has considered the possibility of sending dried milk and vitamins to children in Norway, Holland, and France, as well as in Belgium.

Plans for Post-War Relief

President Roosevelt pledged in November that "no one will go hungry or without the other means of livelihood in any territory occupied by the United Nations if it is humanly within our powers to make the necessary supplies available to them." Despite the strain upon shipping and food supplies, efforts have already been organized to get essential food to North Africa. Additional steps will no doubt be taken. Nevertheless it is clear that substantial relief for the war-ravaged peoples of Europe and Asia hangs upon the defeat of the Axis. Only after victory will there be enough resources and opportunity for large-scale relief. Even then only part of the need can be met. One-fourth of humanity will be in dire want.

While less is known about the situation and fewer preparations are being made to meet it, it is likely that the famine areas of the Far East, particularly China, will be as large and as severe as those in Europe. Many of the most fertile areas of China were overrun by the Japanese three to four years before Pearl Harbor. Looting by the Japanese, scorched-earth defense, floods, droughts and economic strain have already caused the death of millions. Relief supplies to supplement food which can be sent to famine areas from other regions of China will be essential. Some of the needed cereals may be available in the fertile countries of Southern Asia, though these too have been overrun by the Japanese. The New World is the main hope for vitamins and protective foods.

In Europe the situation is deteriorating steadily. This year's crops are reported to be even poorer than last year's subnormal harvest, according to the Department of Agriculture. The famine areas when Hitler falls may be larger than in 1919. The hope of meeting to some extent these tremendous needs rests mainly upon the Americas.

Private relief organizations, such as those supported by the churches, can render a real service to some of the war victims. These agencies offer a more personal ministry to the needs of individuals than government bodies can give. It is heartening to note that plans are being developed to promote a coordinated campaign for the war relief agencies in October. (The Red Cross appeal for $125,000,000 will be made in March.) Nothing less than governmental relief, however, can attempt to deal quickly enough and on a large enough scale with the famine areas of post-war Europe and Asia. Private organizations supplied about 16 per cent of relief administered in Europe after the last war, according to *Relief for Europe*. The percentage may be smaller this time. The government agencies, however, will need to rely upon the experienced personnel of the private groups for the larger program.

Many nations will need help. Several nations can give help. Therefore, international relief needs to be organized by the United Nations on an international basis. International organization of relief, furthermore, would promote the international collaboration and reconstruction so necessary to the establishment of a just peace. Much remains to be done before that goal is achieved. Yet there are signs that steps are gradually being taken in the right direction.

The Lend-Lease machinery is obviously important for post-war relief. The Food Distribution Administration delivered some 2,860,000 tons of food and other agricultural commodities for Lend-Lease shipments during 1942. This was a little less than 6 per cent of the United States food supply for the year. Since its beginning in March 1941, food deliveries under Lend-Lease have totalled about 4,600,000 tons. This amount is over two-thirds as large as the amount of relief supplies delivered by the American Relief Administration after the last war, as calculated in *Relief for Europe*.

In September 1941, two organizations were set up in London. One, the Allied Post-War Requirements Bureau, is an agency of the British Government to estimate and help coordinate post-war requirements of the various countries. The other, the Inter-Allied Relief Committee, is made up of representatives of various United Nations governments, and is to receive the findings of the Bureau. Both groups are chaired by Sir Frederick Leith-Ross.

In December 1942, former Governor Herbert Lehman was made director of the Office of Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation Operations under the Department of State, to organize American participation in United Nations' aid to war victims in areas reoccupied by forces of the United Nations. After the Casablanca conference, it was stated in a report to the New York *Herald Tribune* that the O.F.R.R.O. will be linked with the Leith-Ross group in London. The report also said that the American and British agencies would probably expand the international organization "to take in relief units of all the United Nations that wish to join." Such a step would be heartening progress towards coordination of international relief.

The overshadowing problem is that of food reserves in the New World to meet relief needs. The four great wheat-exporting countries, the United States, Argentina, Canada and Australia agreed in 1942 to create a pool of 100 million bushels for "intergovernmental relief." It was reported on February 19 that the United States Government has earmarked, for relief purposes, 200 million bushels of surplus wheat stocks (including 50 million bushels previously pledged). Far greater stores, however, need to be set up. Much depends upon the size of the 1943 harvest in the United States.

Goals of Production

Last year American farmers reaped the greatest harvest in our national history. The food and fibre production was 39 per cent larger than the war harvest of 1918. It was 10 per cent greater than the record harvest of 1941. Many factors contributed to the bumper harvest. The weather was particularly favorable. There was a rise in prices for farm products. According to Department of Agriculture figures, prices received by farmers rose from September 1939 to December 1942 as follows: 64 per cent for dairy products, 68 per cent for meat animals, 79 per cent for chickens and eggs, 107 per cent for fruits, 113 per cent for cotton and 150 per cent for vegetables. The response of farmers to the demands of the war emergency was an additional factor. And in many sections groups of women, boys, and business men volunteered to meet part of the labor shortage by helping with peak harvests.

To many it seems paradoxical that food rationing should follow hard upon the heels of our record harvest. Here, too, many factors enter in. Millions of Americans are leading more active lives. Boys in the armed forces need a diet nearly twice as large as that of the average civilian. War employment and war wages enable the poorer third of the nation to eat more and better foods than has been possible for many years.

Additional food is needed to help other peoples of the United Nations who are bearing the brunt of the Axis aggression. Britain's needs are heavy since large amounts of food were formerly imported from European countries. Greatly increased food shipments to Russia are necessary during 1943, to reduce to some extent the severe privations of the Russian people. Further food supplies will be needed for looted countries liberated from the Axis. In 1941, the government required 4 per cent of American food production for our allies and our own armed forces. Last year, it required 13 per cent. This year it will require 25 per cent or more.

Rationing is also made necessary by the fact that the demand for food at home and abroad is a demand for particular types of food. The army, Lend-Lease, and domestic consumers all ask for meat, dairy products, eggs, and certain vegetables. Packaging and transportation problems further limit certain types of foods available for the home market. During 1943, our armed forces and allies will need one-fourth of the meat produced in the United States, one-third of the eggs and lard, and over half of the canned vegetables. To distribute the "priority" foods sensibly and equitably, rationing is absolutely essential.

Planned food production is also essential, if available resources of manpower, machinery and materials are to be used efficiently. Last winter the Department of Agriculture worked out, for the first time in our history, fairly comprehensive blueprints for the 1942 crop. The plan set goals for production in the "priority" foods: oil crops, livestock, poultry and eggs, dairy products and certain vegetables. Goals were also set for less urgent crops, as wheat, short cotton and tobacco. Crop payments were used to increase the war crops and decrease the less urgent crops. As a result of the program, the country produced twice as many soybeans and peanuts as in 1941, 20 million more hogs, 7 billion more eggs, and 4 billion more pounds of milk.

The production plan for this year calls for an over-all increase of 4 per cent. Emphasis is placed upon still further increases in the necessary war crops. Specific goals include 2 per cent more milk, 16 per cent more meat (or a third more than is normally consumed), 28 per cent more chickens and 15 per cent more turkeys, 8 per cent more eggs, 10 per cent more soybeans and 32 per cent more peanuts (important oil crops), 39 per cent more dry beans, 37 per cent more dry peas, 14 per cent more potatoes, 32 per cent more sweet-potatoes and more fresh-cut vegetables, particularly tomatoes, snap beans, peas and sweet corn. These increases are designed to help meet the growing needs for proteins and oils.

The food goals, worked out by the Department of Agriculture and other agencies assign quotas to the various states. The State War Boards break down these quotas into county quotas. Local committeemen of the County War Boards then visit the farmers of the county to consult on individual production goals. Fulfilment of the national goals obviously cannot be a matter of certainty until the harvest is in, since it depends upon voluntary compliance with the program by some six million farm families and upon their ability to attain their individual goals.

Certain financial mechanisms, however, are being developed to help assure fulfillment of the plan. The system of crop subsidies under the Agricultural Adjustment Agency for certain staple crops now include stiff deductions for failure to plant at least 90 per cent of the individual allotment in the subsidized crop or in one of the war crops. The program of loans for small farmers may be continued. The Department of Agriculture is undertaking a price support program to guarantee minimum prices for necessary crops. Finally, Secretary Wickard has requested $100,000,000 for "incentive payments" to farmers producing from 90 to 110 per cent of their goal in war crops. This selective subsidy plan has received a setback, however, through a negative vote by a House Appropriations subcommittee. The farm lobby and farm bloc are campaigning for a general rise in farm prices.

A financial program, however, is only part of the problem of food production. Much depends upon favorable weather. Much depends upon the three "M's": manpower, machinery and materials.

Means of Production

Men, machinery and materials — these are crucial unsolved problems of the American farmer. The goals of food production will not count for much unless the essential means of production are available. The course of the war and mobilization has hit hard each of the three essential elements of efficient and large-scale farming.

The demand for chemicals in war plants has greatly reduced the amount of nitrogen fertilizers available. It is likely that the supply of these, at least for the less essential crops, will be reduced by one half during the current year. The supply of special supplementary feeds for livestock and poultry is also said to be reduced by war scarcity.

To understand the machinery and manpower situation, we should be aware of the mechanization of modern agriculture in the United States. According to a study by the National Bureau of Economic Research, the productivity of the farm worker has risen more than 50 per cent since 1900. Farmers in 1939 produced 30 per cent more than in 1920 and 60 per cent more than in 1900, despite a decrease of 16 per cent in the labor force on farms. Some 2,000,000 tractors, better varieties of plants, and improved methods of culture were the main factors.

The importance of farm machinery is seen in the war record of Britain, where an increase of 150 per cent in tractors has helped to double food production and cut food imports in half. In this country, the war demands for iron and steel have greatly reduced the production of new farm machinery. The manufacture of new machinery was gradually cut to 23 per cent of the 1940 level. To compensate for this shortage, an increase of 45 per cent in repair parts was authorized. Recently both figures have been raised. But a shortage of farm machinery seems inevitable.

To overcome this handicap, it is essential that farmers and farm communities exercise the "ingenuity and co-operative effort" which President Roosevelt stressed in his speech on October 12. In many parts of this country farmers have in the past developed cooperative practices to utilize fully the machinery at their disposal. By sharing the complicated tools of production it is possible to utilize them more fully. This neighborly practice is one of the ways by which Canadian farmers are struggling to overcome shortages in machinery. It is one of the necessary steps in this country.

Most serious of all is the drain of manpower from the farms. There are somewhat more than 6 million farm families in the United States, with a normal labor force of 8½ to 9 million people. During peak harvests this number may rise to nearly 12 million. The Bureau of Agricultural Economics estimates that between April, 1940 and October, 1942 nearly 3 million farm workers were lost to agriculture through moving to cities for war work, through engaging in non-farm work while living on farms and through induction into the armed forces. It is true that the net total on October 1, 1942, was only 250,000 below that on October 1, 1940, but the additional farm workers were mainly women, children, young people and older men, so that the qualitative loss in farm labor was severe. The Bureau also estimates that a further 1,200,000 farm workers may be lost during 1943 unless the trend is checked or reversed.

In some ways, the problem of skilled farm labor is the most difficult. While the number involved is comparatively small, the men involved cannot be easily replaced. The skill of scientific farming cannot be transmitted quickly — certainly not in time for the 1943 season. Consequently, it is necessary to stop the draining of these skilled workers from agriculture to the armed forces and to war industry. New regulations, according to Major General Hershey, have prevented the induction of 100,000 farm workers since mid-November. More rigorous regulations are probably needed. And, if possible, the trend should be reversed.

Moreover, the essential character of the job should be recognized socially, so that these skilled men will realize the high patriotism of winning the food goals for 1943. Wages in keeping with industrial wages are equally necessary. With these and other safeguards there will still be a shortage of skilled farm workers. "Dilution" of these trained workers by putting them in charge of untrained workers is probably the inescapable expedient, under the circumstances.

The problem of labor for general farm work for sowing and harvesting, for help in farm households, and so on, is large but possible of solution. The Bureau of the Census estimates the labor reserve in November, 1942 at 5 million, of whom 4,500,000 were women (mainly housewives). One sixth of the people in the reserve were willing to undertake farm jobs, according to a questionnaire. Older men in non-essential jobs, high school students, and soldiers are other potential sources.

A United States Crop Corps is planned of 3,500,000 city residents, high school students, and workers in non-essential industries is planned for this summer. Volunteers will be asked to pledge a certain number of weekdays, week-ends or evenings to help harvest a local crop. The two agencies charged with immediate responsibility are the U. S. Employment Service and the Agricultural Extension Service.

If the Crop Corps is organized with imagination and determination, it should help greatly to save many of the peak-harvest crops in areas not too far from urban centers. The time element is vital. As Secretary of Agriculture Claude R. Wickard said on February 16: "Farmers must be given assurance before they begin planting that there will be sufficient manpower available to gather in their crops." To achieve the food goals for 1943, nothing is more important than effective action on this issue.

Small-Scale Production

There are two important groups of food producers in the United States for whom the problems of farm machinery and extra farm labor are not serious issues. These are the small farmers and the town or suburban dwellers able to operate small gardens. Because of the shortages in manpower and machinery, these groups are doubly important for the success of the food program.

The mechanization of American agriculture has tended to convert the farmer into a skilled farm worker or large operator on the one hand, or a relatively unskilled farm worker. The greater efficiency of large-scale production tends to force the small farmer either to expand or to lose his farm. Especially since the extension of farm production during the first World War, the small farmer has had his back to the wall. An important group in American society has been threatened with extinction.

In 1935 a rehabilitation program was set up under the Farm Security Administration of the Department of Agriculture. The task of this agency has been to put as many of the small farmers back on their feet as possible, by means of loans, advice on farming, aid in securing better land if necessary and so on. Since its establishment, the F.S.A. has given a new lease on life to the little farmer. Nearly a million families have been provided with supervised credit – a loan combined with personal guidance. Other activities of the F.S.A. have included arranging better medical care and other community services, helping some tenant farmers to buy farms and providing camps for migrant workers.

The accomplishments of the Farm Security Administration form one of the most hopeful aspects of the present situation. Borrowers from the F.S.A. have largely been restored as self-reliant farmers. Repayments of the loans amount to 92 per cent of maturities. Moreover the net income of these borrowers by January 1942, had increased an average of 60 per cent, as their production increased. Therefore, the small farmers are in a comparatively good position to help achieve the 1943 food production goals. During 1942, F.S.A. borrowers produced 36 per cent of the total increase in milk production in the United States, according to a statement by the National Child Labor Committee.

The small farmer (there are 1,600,000 farm families earning less than $900 a year, wholly or mainly from farming) can make a notable contribution to winning the battle for food, with a comparatively small amount of help. Some need credit, advice and supervision to increase their production. Others need to be relocated as farmers or farm workers. The Farm Security Administration has the experience and personnel for the job – if it has the necessary funds. It is reported that a strong move is under way in Congress to turn down the appropriation of this agency. Some of the farm organizations which represent the wealthier large-scale farmers and compose the farm lobby are said to oppose the F.S.A. The reestablishment of an alternative credit agency, the Regional Agricultural Credit Corporation, is a strong indication that a move to end the work of the F.S.A. is under way. Many religious groups working on farm problems are agreed that no current legislative issue, relative to farmers and food production, is more important than the continuation of the Farm Security Administration.

The other group of potential food producers is composed of the Victory Gardeners of town and city. Secretary Wickard has called upon every town, city and suburban family with a sufficient plot of sunny and fertile soil, or access to a community garden, to join in the Victory Garden program. The goal is 18 million home gardens during 1943, 12 million in urban areas and 6 million on farms. During 1917-18, the more than 5 million war gardens yielded an estimated 264,000 tons of vegetables. Greatly to surpass this record is the hope.

Victory Gardens will increase the supply of vital but labor-consuming protective foods. They will make more of the commercial crops available for the armed forces, the allied nations, and foreign relief. They will make home canning possible and thus save precious metals. They will reduce the strain on transportation facilities.

Of course, helping to harvest the commercial crops will be for many a more important service than tending a home garden. This is particularly true, if prospective Victory Gardeners are unlikely to care for the garden conscientiously – four or five hours a week. Seed production in 1942 was 26 per cent larger than in 1941, but there are no seeds to waste. Seeds form an indispensable part of aid to allied and liberated countries. Former Governor Lehman pointed out recently that behind the first measures to stop starvation "must come provision of seeds to get a new crop into the ground" so that "the populations once more can begin to help themselves." The same safeguards are needed to stretch out the limited chemical fertilizers available.

The Victory Garden of the school, the home, or the community offers probably the best opportunity for children too young for work in fields away from home to participate in the food program, if such participation is carefully supervised. Dr. Walter Gaumitz of the Office of Education said recently that "there are 12 million boys and girls from the fifth to the twelfth grade in school who are potential gardeners and whose dynamic energy should be directed to production by their communities."

The food goals for 1943 call for imagination, energy, and willingness on the part of many with little knowledge of farming to undertake new tasks.

PROGRAM SUGGESTIONS

What can the churches do to help achieve the critical harvest of 1943? We have in mind the city church, for the rural parish will be, in any case, absorbed in the struggle for food. Here are a few suggestions as to practical steps which groups in urban churches might undertake. Improvement on the suggestions will no doubt be made by insight into local conditions or by the experience gained in practice. The main thing is that we in the churches rise to the challenge of this humanitarian task.

Gardens

Many church members interested in Victory Gardens will need help in planning and developing a home garden, if labor, seed, and soil are not to be wasted. A class for Victory Gardeners on certain fundamentals of good practice and on local conditions might save many a mistake and help to increase the garden yields. An experienced farmer in the congregation, community or adjacent area could serve as instructor. Basic pamphlets which can be secured from the Department of Agriculture are: *The Victory Garden, The City Home Garden,* and *The Farm Garden.*

A group garden is another practical project for those who lack the soil or the time for a home garden. Many churches own a suitable plot of land for such a garden. By apportioning the work, the project could be made feasible even for very busy members of the congregation. The produce of the church garden could be used for church suppers, for school lunches or local relief, or could be sold for church expenses or foreign relief. The by-product of group fellowship would make the project doubly worthwhile.

Crop Volunteers

It is by no means certain that the national program can be organized quickly enough to give farmers the necessary personal assurance of harvest help. This is particularly true of sections where crops were lost last year through lack of labor. A practical program for a city church group might well be to get in touch with farmers through a rural church in the vicinity, to evidence concern and to pledge help. Of course, any such "church to church" arrangement should be cleared through the official agencies. Quick steps are, in any case, essential.

Religious groups not located in peak-harvest areas may still be able to help. Volunteers for general farm work on available days, women to help in farm families to release the wives for farm work, women to conduct nurseries for younger farm children — there are many opportunities. The development of urban-rural understanding and fellowship is not the least of the possible values.

In many sections, older high school young people will be asked to volunteer for harvesting. Our churches ought to help provide adult leaders for the projects, leaders who not only can guard the welfare of young people but can help them to gain a more meaningful understanding of the experience. Leaders should secure the reprint, *Safeguarding Young Workers in Wartime Agriculture* from the Children's Bureau, Department of Labor, and the *Guide to Leaders of Farm Aides* from the Y.W.C.A., 600 Lexington Avenue, New York.

Conservation

The great need for canned goods overseas and the dearth of tin will require a great increase in home canning. Indeed, where the garden program is particularly successful, canning may be necessary to save part of the crops. Since many city housewives have had little experience with this aspect of domestic science, a group project might well be undertaken by the women's society.

The larger question of conservation is another pertinent issue for women's groups in the churches. Secretary Wickard said on January 24:

> We have a reservoir of farm products, namely, the supplies that ordinarily we waste, such as the excess fat on beef and pork chops, the stale baked goods, the leftovers. Much more sacrifice than we make as yet, would not cut seriously into our nutrition or put us on a par with our allies in privation.

A study group on nutrition and ways to prevent waste would be a practical recognition of the direct relation between conservation and our ability to save the lives of war victims abroad. For the same reason, church members should consider ways to promote a better attitude towards rationing in the community. Adequate rationing is the one hope that food supplies can be shared with valiant but undernourished allies, without injury to the health of the American people.

Legislative Action

Church members should study the problems of the little farmer. Materials can be secured from the Home Missions Council, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York, or the National Child Labor Committee, 419 Fourth Avenue, New York (see SUGGESTED READING). Letters regarding the appropriation of the Farm Security Administration, reported to be threatened, should be sent to the Representatives and Senators.

Relief

The relief which can be given to war victims without waiting for any governmental action is worthy of more thoughtful and conscientious consideration than most of us have given. A dollar given today to China Relief, for example, may save a life next month on the edge of a famine area. For that dollar, transferred to China, may help to buy and transport life-sustaining rice from a section of China that can spare it to one which cannot do without it. If we can visualize or dramatize the history of our relief donations, we can grasp more fully the human and religious significance of this work. Simplified meals, in the home or at church socials, are another way to make relief more meaningful.

SUGGESTED READING

Relief for Europe. 1942. National Planning Association, 800 21st Street, N.W., Washington, D. C. 25 cents.

This group study, the seventeenth in the series of "Planning Pamphlets" provides an excellent summary of the situation and of possibilities for meeting it. A fine handbook for group study or individual reading.

Food: A Weapon for Victory by Bertram Fowler. 1942. Little, Brown, Boston. $1.50.

A longer discussion of the task of feeding postwar Europe. The author does not attempt to deal with relief problems in Asia.

What Americans Think About Post-War Reconstruction. *Foreign Policy Reports, October 1942; January 1943.* Foreign Policy Association, 22 East 38 Street, New York. 25 cents each.

Seven editors judge public opinion on issues of foreign policy, relief, world organization.

The Churches and Rural Life

American Rural Life — A Christian Concern by Benson Y. Landis. 1942. Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, Witherspoon Building, Philadelphia. 10 cents.

A good study course on rural problems prepared especially for groups in city churches.

A National Program for the Rural Church. 1938. Home Missions Council, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York. 10 cents.

Proposals of Protestant leaders to increase the effectiveness of the rural church.

God's Back Pasture by Arthur W. Hewett. 1941. Willett, Clark, Chicago. $1.50.

A vivid picture of a rural parish by a pastor in Vermont.

The Encyclicals and Agriculture by Edgar Schmiedeler. 1936. National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1312 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D. C. 10 cents.

Catholic teaching on the application of religious principles to rural life.

A Word to Pastors

The Rt. Rev. G. Ashton Oldham, Bishop of Albany and President of the American Council of the World Alliance, has written a pamphlet of stimulating Lenten suggestions for pastors entitled *Choose You This Day.* The six themes deal with basic spiritual values in individual, national, and international life: *Self-Righteousness or Repentance, Self or God, Words or Deeds, Clean Hands or Dirty Tasks, Safety or Sacrifice, Vengeance or Reconciliation.* Ministers of all denominations will find help in the themes and reading suggestions. Orders should be sent to this office. The price is 5 cents per single copy postpaid; $3.00 per 100 copies.

Problems of Farmers

Democratic Issues in Food Production by Elizabeth Herring. April 1943. Council for Social Action, 289 Fourth Avenue, New York. 15 cents.

The April issue of *Social Action* will contain valuable material on the problems of the small farmer by an agricultural expert of the Y.W.C.A.

How Good is the Good Earth?; Food by Courtenay Dinwiddie. 1943. National Child Labor Committee, 419 Fourth Avenue, New York. 10 cents each.

Two stirring pamphlets on the work of the Farm Security Administration and the need to continue its service.

How Can We Get Maximum Food Production? 1943, Town Meeting of the Air, 123 West 43 Street, New York. 10 cents.

Strong criticism of government fumbling on food production by Louis Bromfield, and a statement by Clifford Townsend of the Department of Agriculture.

Is There Enough Manpower? by Harold W. Metz. 1942. Brookings Institution, Washington, D. C. 25 cents.

A factual analysis of the manpower available to meet the various economic and military needs.

The Farmer's Search for Economic Democracy by Thomas A. Tripp. 1941. Council for Social Action, 289 Fourth Avenue, New York. 15 cents.

A clear story of the movements of agrarian revolt in the United States.

Farmers in a Changing World. 1941. Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C. $1.50.

The 1940 Yearbook of Agriculture contains many fine articles and surveys on the human and social aspects of farming.

The Social Economics of Agriculture by Wilson Gee. 1942. Macmillan, New York. $4.00.

The revised edition of a comprehensive statement of the economic and social conditions of American rural life.

Ill Fares the Land by Carey McWilliams. 1942. Little, Brown, Boston. $3.00.

A full-length picture of the problems of the migrant laborers.

Magazine Articles

The February 8 of issue of *Christianity and Crisis* has two articles on the need for immediate relief in Europe. The *Saturday Evening Post* for February 20 has an article by James W. Johnson, "We Must Feed Europe's Children." Mr. Hoover's analysis is in the November 28 and December 5 issues of *Collier's.* (The August 1 issue has a vivid story on the F.S.A. program in the South.) The November-December issue of *New Europe* has an article by Ch. Belilowsky, "Seed and Feeding the Post-War World." The October 3 issue of the Federal Council's *Information Service* analyses the question of parity prices.

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